



Introduction to Constructed Travel in DTS

Summary

When you perform official travel for DoD, the Authorizing Official (AO) will authorize or direct you* to use a specific transportation mode (i.e., the *directed transportation mode*). Per the *Joint Travel Regulations (JTR)*, par. 020206. M., Commercial airplane is the DoD's preferred mode for official travel more than 400 miles one way or more than 800 miles round trip. Sometimes you might prefer traveling using a different transportation mode (i.e., your *selected transportation mode*). For example, you want to drive your own car**.

The <u>JTR</u> allows you to use your selected transportation mode, but it also gives the AO the right to *limit* your transportation reimbursement, if your choice is more expensive. Constructed travel lets the AO compare the true costs of the same trip using different transportation modes.

To earn more about using a POV, see the <u>JTR</u>, par. 020210. Privately Owned Vehicles (POV) and the Table 2-11. Cost Comparison Rules for Using a POV.

*In this information paper, "you" are generally a traveler; however, the actions described can apply to others who create travel documents – e.g., Non-DTS Entry Agent, travel clerk. There is also a section for AOs.

** The <u>JTR</u>, Appendix A. states, "Privately owned vehicle (POV) is a motor vehicle, including an airplane, boat, or helicopter that is owned or leased for personal use."

Note: The primary focus of this information paper is on planning and coordinating constructed travel on an authorization; although, many of the same actions can also apply on a voucher, if you used a transportation mode the AO did not authorize.

The Basic Constructed Travel Process

It's important to understand that constructed travel does not apply on most official trips. To determine if constructed travel rules apply to your trip, ask yourself these questions:

- Do I want to use a transportation mode that is neither the directed transportation mode nor the Government's preferred transportation mode?
- Do I want to drive a POV (car or motorcycle) over 400 miles on any one-way travel leg (e.g., from home to a TDY location)?

If the answer to both questions is, "Yes," constructed travel applies and you must complete a <u>Pre-Travel Worksheet</u>. If the answer to either question is "No," constructed travel does not apply, and you don't need to complete a cost comparison, even if DTS displays a **Constructed Travel Pre-Audit** flag (see the *Constructed Travel Pre-Audit Flag Triggers* section of this information paper). Note: Follow your local business rules on what your organization wants you to enter for the **Constructed Travel Pre-Audit** flag when under the *JTR* miles threshold.

When constructed travel applies, here's what happens:

1. You create your DTS authorization to reflect the total costs of the trip for your selected transportation mode.

The Basic Constructed Travel Process (continued)

- You complete a <u>Pre-Travel Worksheet</u> to show the estimated cost (a.k.a., the <u>constructed</u> cost) of the directed transportation mode and attach it to the DTS document. You may also include cost avoidances and additional considerations on the <u>Pre-Travel Worksheet</u>.
- 3. The AO considers the information in both your authorization and the <u>Pre-Travel Worksheet</u> and decides how to authorize your trip either allowing:
 - a. Full reimbursement for the selected transportation mode.

-or-

b. You to use your selected transportation mode, but limit your transportation reimbursement to the constructed cost of the directed transportation mode.

Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the constructed cost decision process.

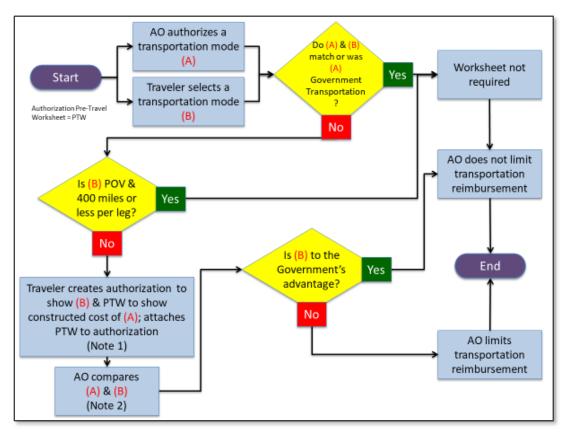


Figure 1: The Constructed Travel Process

Notes:

- 1. The *Pre-Travel and Post-Travel Worksheets Layout* section of this document explains to the traveler how to complete a **Pre-Travel Worksheet** (PTW). If you are using an alternate worksheet, contact the document creator for complete instructions.
- 2. The AO Review and Approve Travel Documents section of this document outlines the considerations the AO uses to determine which transportation mode is advantageous to the Government.

Constructed Travel Pre-Audit Flag Triggers

Some selections you make in DTS trigger a **Constructed Travel Worksheet Pre-Audit** flag (Figure 2, Indicator 1), which tells you that you may need to provide a <u>Pre-Travel Worksheet</u>. You will need to justify this flag in one of two ways:

- If you don't need to complete a <u>Pre-Travel Worksheet</u>, justify the flag by stating that a CTW is not required, and explain why (e.g., *JTR*, par. 020210. POV, Table 2-10, states "<u>If</u> the official distance between authorized locations (as determined by the DTOD* or from appropriate distances (non-DoD Services)) is 400 miles or less one way or 800 miles or less round trip, <u>Then</u> use of a private automobile or motorcycle is considered advantageous to the Government. The traveler is reimbursed the appropriate cents per mile for the DTOD* distance between official points. No cost comparison is required."
- If you do need to complete a <u>Pre-Travel Worksheet</u>, select the Constructed Travel
 Worksheet link (Figure 2, Indicator 2) to obtain a blank form (follow the guide) attach it
 to your DTS authorization, and justify the flag by stating you attached the <u>Pre-Travel</u>
 Worksheet to your trip.

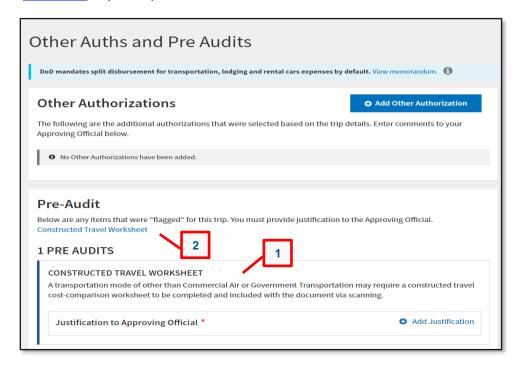


Figure 2: Other Auths and Pre Audits Screen (Top)

Constructed
Travel PreAudit Flag
Triggers
(continued)

The list below identifies the most common selections that trigger the **Constructed Travel Pre-Audit** flag:

- On an authorization the flag triggers when:
 - On the Reservation Expenses screen, in the Select a Rental Car section, under Advanced Options, checking the Using to travel to my TDY location box (Figure 3) to indicate en route travel (travel mode to and from the TDY location).

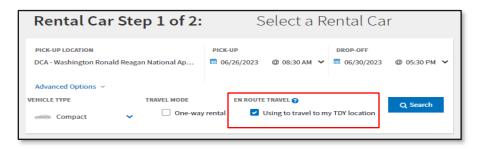


Figure 3: Select a Rental Car Screen (En Route Travel)

- Selecting any expense on the Add New (Figure 4) pop-up screen that reflects travel to, from, or between TDY locations by any transportation mode other than a commercial flight or Government vehicle. Examples include (but are not limited to):
 - Mileage Expense: Private Auto or Motorcycle To/From TDY
 - Transportation Expense: Rental Car at TDY Area
 - Ticketed Expense: Bus Ticket (i.e., Commercial Bus).



Figure 4: Add New Screen (Private Auto)

Constructed Travel Pre-Audit Flag Triggers (continued)

- On a voucher the flag triggers when:
 - Entering any transportation mode that was not on the approved authorization, (unless that transportation mode is a commercial flight or any form of Government transportation).
 - Adding POV en route mileage on the voucher when the authorization only reflected a commercial air travel mode.



Figure 5: Pre-Audit Flag (Transportation Mode Change)

Note 1: The **Pre-Audit** flag for **Constructed Travel Worksheet** as described in Figure 2 may also appear.

Note 2: In the description for the **Transportation Mode Change** flag. **Note: CP** stands for Commercial Plane.

Pre-Travel and Post-Travel Worksheets and Guides Locations There are two ways to locate and open a blank <u>Pre-Travel Worksheet</u>:

- 1. Open through a DTS document.
 - a. In your trip, navigate to the **Other Auths and Pre Audits** screen.

Pre-Travel and Post-Travel Worksheets and Guides Locations (continued)

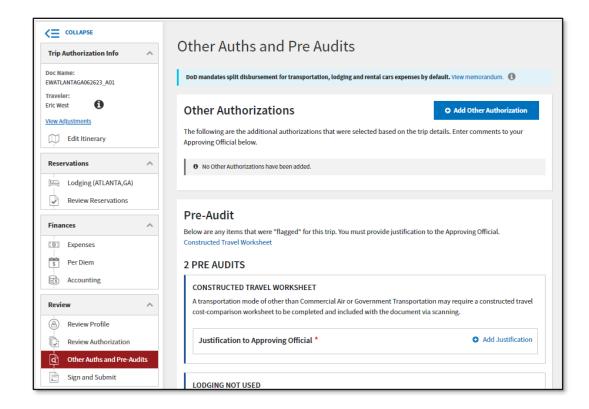


Figure 6: Pre-Audit (for Constructed Travel Worksheet) Screen

b. Select the **Constructed Travel Worksheet** link (Figure 6). The **Constructed Travel Home** page opens (Figure 7).

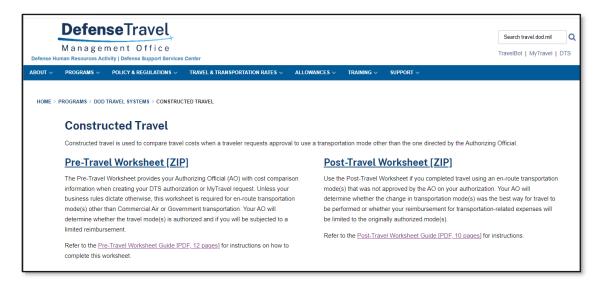


Figure 7: Constructed Travel Home Page

c. Locate the appropriate worksheet or guide. Note: For DTS authorizations if constructed travel applies then use the Pre-Travel Worksheet. For DTS vouchers if constructed travel applies then use the Post-Travel Worksheet. Pre-Travel and Post-Travel Worksheets and Guides Locations (continued)

- d. For the **Pre-Travel Worksheet** or **Post-Travel Worksheet**, select the zip file link. The **Save As** window appears.
- e. Choose a folder location to download/save the document. Then select **SAVE**.
- f. Open the saved document. See *Pre-Travel and Post-Travel Worksheets Layout* section of this paper to complete the forms.
- 2. Access directly from the DTMO Website. Navigate to https://travel.dod.mil/Programs/DoD-Travel-Systems/Constructed-Travel/.
 - a. User the same steps to access the worksheets as outline in c-f listed above complete the form.

Pre-Travel and Post-Travel Worksheets Layout

The **Pre-Travel Worksheet** has four main sections, as shown in Figure 8. The accompanying guide explains in detail how to complete the form. The **Post-Travel Worksheet** contains five main sections (not shown for this paper) which are also explained in the accompanying guide. As stated previously, you can obtain the guides from the DTMO website.

Note: Consult your local business rules to ensure you comply with all local constructed travel guidance.

The sections of the form (Figure 8) provide key information the AO will use when deciding whether to limit your transportation reimbursement. They are:

- Sections 1 and 2: Enter details of the itinerary and transportation costs as if you were
 using the directed transportation mode. This establishes the constructed cost. If the AO
 limits your transportation reimbursement, this is the maximum amount you may receive
 to reimburse you for your transportation costs.
- **Section 3:** Enter additional travel-related costs that are neither in the constructed cost nor on the authorization, but that you would incur if you were to use the directed transportation mode. It helps the AO to better understand the complete cost of the trip, if it were accomplished using the directed transportation mode.
- **Section 4:** Select factors that could influence the overall trip cost or that could prevent you from accomplishing your mission if you used the directed transportation mode (e.g., shipping equipment costs, weather delay possibilities).

Note: if you are uncertain on how to complete the forms, contact your DTA or supervisor for assistance.

Pre-Travel and Post-Travel Worksheets Layout (continued)

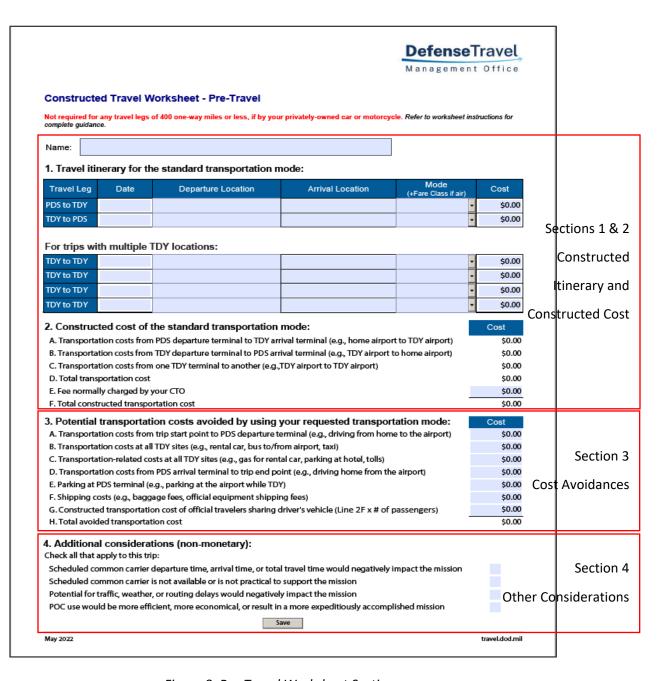


Figure 8: Pre-Travel Worksheet Sections

Constructed Travel Examples

Here are some examples to help improve your understanding of constructed travel. Except for Scenario 5, let's assume the AO wanted you to take commercial air, but you wanted to drive your POV.

Note: This paper only provides a few scenarios. Other constructed travel situations are possible.

Scenario 1: A simple comparison with cheaper airfare

- 1. Per your DTS authorization, your POV mileage and allowable reimbursable expenses equal \$400.
- 2. Per your **Pre-Travel Worksheet**, the constructed airfare cost is **\$350**. You entered no cost avoidances or other considerations.
- 3. Result: Drive=\$400. Fly=\$350. The AO limited your transportation reimbursement, so you'll receive \$350 if you drive.

Scenario 2: A simple comparison with cheaper driving costs

- 1. Per your DTS authorization, your POV mileage and allowable reimbursable expenses equal \$650.
- 2. Per your **Pre-Travel Worksheet**, the constructed airfare cost is **\$800**. You entered no cost avoidances or other considerations.
- 3. Result: Drive=\$650. Fly=\$800. The AO did not limit your transportation reimbursement, so you will receive \$650 if you drive.

Scenario 3: A comparison with cheaper airfare and cost avoidances

- 1. Per your DTS authorization, your POV mileage and allowable reimbursable expenses equal \$450.
- 2. Per your **Pre-Travel Worksheet**, the constructed airfare cost is \$375. You'll have your own car at the TDY location and you won't have to rent a vehicle that you otherwise would have rented, so you entered a cost avoidance of \$325 for the rental car and gas.
- 3. Result: Drive=\$450. Fly=\$375 (+\$325 for the rental car = an overall cost of \$700). Flying initially seems cheaper, but given the extra costs associated with the rental car, allowing you to drive is a better value for the Government. The AO did not limit your transportation reimbursement, so you will receive \$450 if you drive.

Constructed Travel Examples (continued)

Scenario 4: Another comparison with cheaper airfare and cost avoidances

- Per your DTS authorization, your POV mileage and allowable reimbursable expenses equal \$525. You will also incur an additional \$300 for per diem on the extra travel days required to drive to and from the TDY location.
- 2. Per your **Pre-Travel Worksheet**, the constructed airfare cost is **\$550**. You'll have your own car at the TDY location and you won't have to rent a vehicle that you otherwise would have rented, so you entered a cost avoidance of **\$250** for the rental car and gas.
- 3. Result: Drive=\$525 (+\$300 in extra per diem = an overall cost of \$825). Fly=\$550 (+\$250 for the rental car = an overall cost of \$800). Although the transportation costs are higher to fly, when you consider the extra per diem, flying is a better value for the Government, even after factoring in the extra costs associated with the rental car. The AO limited your transportation reimbursement and required you to enter a non-per diem status (e.g., leave) on all extra travel days, so you'll receive \$525 if you drive, but no extra per diem.

Scenario 5: A voucher comparison with cost avoidances and additional considerations

- 1. Per your DTS voucher, you did not fly back to your PDS as the AO approved on the authorization. Instead, you drove a one-way rental car at a cost of \$300. As you explained in a comment, you used the rental car because A) a snowstorm closed the airport for your connecting flight, B) no other flights to your destination were available until the next day, and C) you had an urgent meeting at your duty station that you would have missed, if you stayed at the TDY location for an extra day.
- 2. Per your **Pre-Travel Worksheet**, the authorized airfare cost for the return flight was **\$150**. It also shows that had you remained overnight to catch a re-scheduled flight, you would have incurred **\$125** for an extra day of per diem. It also shows the weather delay mentioned above, but without the explanation.
- 3. Result of this one-way trip: Drive=\$300. Fly=\$150 (+\$125 in extra per diem = an overall cost of \$275). Flying seems cheaper, even with the extra per diem factored in, but because of the additional considerations (the weather delay, the urgent meeting), the AO chose not to limit your transportation reimbursement, so you will receive \$300 for the return trip to your PDS.
 Note: Remember when changing travel modes and incurring additional cost, it is a good idea to contact the AO for approval for the changes (e.g., one-way rental car).

Mixed Modes – Constructed Travel

Mixed-mode constructed travel occurs when you use more than one en route transportation mode (e.g., POV + Airfare, POV + Train, POV + Rental Car, POV + Bus). Per *JTR*, par. 020210-G. Reimbursement for Mixed-Mode Travel When POV Is Involved, "When an individual travels partly by POV and partly by commercial modes between any two points listed as separate legs of the trip (see 020205), the travel is mixed mode. Reimbursement depends upon whether or not use of the POV was more advantageous to the Government."

Mixed Modes – Constructed Travel (continued)

You will need to complete a **Pre-Travel Worksheet** providing a comparison between the total cost of using both transportation modes (fly + drive) and the cost of using the directed mode for the entire trip (fly + fly) and include it in the document. To provide documentation validating the cost of the standard transportation mode, use the *GSA City Pair Program (CPP)* website.

The JTR, Table 2-12. Mixed-Mode Allowances and Reimbursements outlines the conditions for **Allowances** and the **Determining Reimbursement**. If POV use is not to the Government's advantage, then reimbursement is limited to the constructed cost of the authorized mode of transportation for the entire leg of the journey, plus the associated per diem.

AO Review and Approve Travel Documents

The AO determines whether travel is necessary and appropriate to the mission, ensures that all expenses claimed by the traveler are valid, and authorizes or approves the valid expenses IAW the <u>JTR</u>. As an AO you will carefully review each expense entry, all comments, the supporting documentation, receipts, **Pre-Audit** flags, **Reason Codes**, and justifications confirming the document is within compliance of travel regulations and local policy.

To assist you in completing the task, the <u>Desktop Guide for Authorizing Officials</u> provides basic information to AOs on their official roles, explains the various tasks to complete along with a detailed checklist for each DTS document type. If you determine a document does not meet compliance and policy requirements, then return it (with comments) for traveler corrective action. In addition, the <u>AO Checklist and Instructions</u> trifold provides assists with reviewing documents and steps on how to complete actions in DTS.

If a traveler prefers to use a POV as the mode of travel, you will need to ensure the transportation reimbursement is in accordance with the <u>JTR</u>. As an AO you should always review the <u>JTR</u> to assist help you understand constructed travel and determine reimburse for such expenses as POV use. Some key paragraphs not mentioned above are *par. 20203*.

Transportation Types Most Advantageous to the Government, to determine what is allowable in

the cost comparison, and the par. 020302. Allowable Travel Time As It Affects Per Diem to name a few.

Within the DTS document, when the mileage expense type is indicated you must verify the following:

- The traveler entered all mileage allowances accurately.
- If mileage is authorized and allowable, and it is not duplicated elsewhere in the document.
- The traveler used the DTOD for en route mileage.
- The traveler entered reasonable odometer mileage to official locations for in-andaround mileage.
- If the Pre-Travel or Post-Travel Worksheet is required, ensure that the traveler attached the supporting record.

AO - Review and Approve Travel Documents (continued)

 The traveler attached documentation validating the cost of the standard transportation mode, such as information from the <u>GSA City Pair Program (CPP)</u> website.

During the review process, if the traveler requested (authorization) or used (voucher) a transportation mode you did not authorize, the **Digital Signature** screen will display a **Constructed Travel Worksheet (CTW) Cost Comparison tool**. Use the available information within the tool to either *limit* the traveler's transportation reimbursement or to *allow* the traveler to receive the *full* reimbursement for their selected transportation mode. Once you approve the trip, the traveler is able to view their document and see if their transportation reimbursement reflects *full* or *limited*.

Note 1: If you were prompted to *limit* the travel on the authorization and did not, then you are not allowed to *limit* it on the voucher. See the *JTR*, par. 010206. Travel Authorizations and Orders, and the <u>JTR Supplement, Travel Orders</u>.

Note 2: Mixed-mode constructed travel occurs when the traveler uses more than one en route transportation mode. For example, you direct a traveler to fly commercial air. The traveler flies to a TDY location, then purchases a POV and drives it home. The traveler must provide a comparison between the total cost of using both transportation modes (fly + drive) and the cost of using the directed mode for the entire trip (fly + fly) and include it in the document. If you don't limit the transportation reimbursement, the traveler will receive the total constructed cost for all transportation types used. If you approve the trip as *limited*, the traveler's transportation reimbursement may not exceed the constructed cost of travel by the directed mode.

Checking for Transportation Reimbursement Limitation

There are several ways you can see whether the AO *limited* your transportation reimbursement. This information paper shows just two of them. They both start with you logging onto DTS and viewing your travel document, which opens on the **Review Trip Authorization** (or **Voucher**) screen.

- 1. Scroll down to the *Accounting* section (Figure 9), which shows two costs, **ACTUAL** (Indicator 1) and **ALLOWED** (Indicator 2).
 - The **ACTUAL** amount (Figure 9, Indicator 1) shows the costs you entered.
 - The **ALLOWED** amount (Figure 9, Indicator 2) shows the costs the AO approved.
 - If the amounts match, the AO did not limit your transportation reimbursement. If the amount in the ALLOWED column is smaller than the ACTUAL, the AO limited your transportation reimbursement.

Checking for Transportation Reimbursement Limitation (continued)



Figure 9: Review Trip Screen (Accounting Summary Section)

- 2. Select Sign and Submit from the Progress Bar. The Digital Signature screen opens.
 - Select Show Previous Stamps to open the document stamping history. If it contains a
 CONSTRUCTED TRAVEL stamp (Figure 10), the COMMENT identifies whether the AO
 limited your transportation reimbursement. Government Amount means they did;
 Traveler Amount means they did not. Go to the Cost Comparison tool to see the costs involved.



Figure 10: Digital Signature Screen (Document History)

Note: When **Constructed Travel** rules apply, the **Digital Signature** screen displays a **CTW Cost Comparison** tool (Figure 11). The screen displays the figures the AO used when deciding whether to limit your transportation reimbursement, but does not identify whether they actually limited the trip. See the **Digital Signature** stamp for transportation reimbursement.

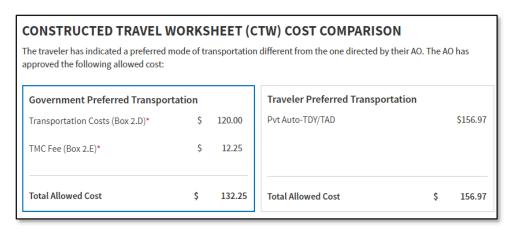


Figure 11: Digital Signature Screen (CTW Cost Comparison Tool)

Key JTR References

Regulations about constructed travel appear throughout the <u>JTR</u>. Below are some key <u>JTR</u> entries to consult when using constructed travel:

- JTR, par. 020210, for information on:
 - Using private autos and motorcycles
 - Cost comparisons, highlighting constructed costs allowable when comparing POVs against other transportation modes
 - Cost comparisons when using mixed transportation modes that include a POV
- JTR, Table 2-11. Cost Comparison Rules for Using a POV
- JTR Table 2-12. Mixed-Mode Allowances and Reimbursements
- JTR, Appendix A: Definitions and Acronyms, Policy Constructed Airfare (definition)

Resources

The DTMO website provides several travel resources. To see the full list, go to the main <u>Training</u> page and search the <u>Training Search Tool</u>. Below are some references.

- DTS Guide 2: Authorizations
- DTS Guide 3: Vouchers
- How to Calculate POV Mileage Allowances
- Joint Travel Regulations (JTR)
- Desktop Guide for AOs/COs
- AO Checklist and Instructions
- <u>Passport</u>: TraX WBTs for Constructed Travel, DTS Basics DTS Travel Documents (DTS 101), and DTS Approval Process